



State of South Carolina
Office of The Lieutenant Governor

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Safety of Medicaid patients at risk

Bauer Asks Sanford for DHHS Leadership

COLUMBIA (July 17) -- Lt. Governor André Bauer today requested that Governor Mark Sanford name a permanent director of the Department of Health and Human Services to stem public concern that new Medicaid transportation policies are endangering senior citizens and people with disabilities.

"I respectfully renew my request that you act with dispatch to name a director of the Department of Health and Human Services. That vacancy, now in its fourth month, has resulted in a public perception that no one is responsible or accountable for decisions by this \$4 billion agency that is placing senior citizens and people with disabilities in danger," Lt. Gov. Bauer said in a hand-delivered letter.

Testimony presented at a public hearing held by Lt. Gov. Bauer in Greenville on Monday indicated that "this Cabinet agency has not been conscientious in resolving consumer complaints arising from its new policies on the transport of patients to and from medical appointments," Bauer said.

He said he was pleased that the Legislative Audit Council agreed with him Tuesday morning to audit the Department of Health and Human Services Medicaid transportation contract.

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Lt. Gov. Bauer said he is very concerned that families are reporting frustration at not being able to find someone within the agency who is in charge and can resolve instances of pick-up delays, missed doctor's appointments, and elderly and disabled patients left unattended on street curbs on days with hot weather.

Several telling points were made in Greenville, he said. DHHS, which certifies that nursing home patients are physically impaired to the point that they require skilled nursing care, now requires them to be self sufficient in traveling outside the nursing home to medical appointments. "If fraud is an issue as claimed by DHHS, should that not be motivation to fill the vacant director position as well as two newly vacated deputy director posts?"

He also sent a summary of the Greenville public hearing results to Sen. Harvey Peeler, who as chair of the Senate Medical Affairs Committee, will hold a public hearing in Columbia on Wednesday regarding the Medicaid transportation contract that was put in place on May 1.

Lt. Gov. Bauer stated in his letter to Senator Peeler that, for some reason, the number of Medicaid eligibles, which is a key to provider reimbursement, apparently has abruptly decreased by 30 percent in some counties. "This is among several factors that have led Councils on Aging in Laurens, Greenwood, and Pickens to terminate initial 90-day contracts with the DHHS Medicaid transportation broker, and is contributing to several other counties considering similar actions."

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